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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5289
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RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS 0828
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0401
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA 0010
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON KOSOVO RECOGNITION

REF: STATE 11928

Classified By: Political Counselor Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

11. (C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche to A.A. Adepoju, Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Europe Division, on February 12. Adepoju said Nigeria would continue to remain neutral on the issue of Kosovo recognition, noting that there is no unified African position. He explained that the Biafran war of separation and the current armed conflict in the Niger Delta made Nigeria particularly sensitive to issues of secession. "We are not against Kosovo," Adepoju told Poloff, noting that the GON recognizes the human rights dimension to Kosovo's independence. However, he maintained that any action taken by the GON to recognize that independence officially could be misconstrued by those continuing to support Biafran independence or even Niger Delta militants as support for their own claims to self determination. Adepoju contended that the issue is sensitive to several African nations and that, as a result, Kosovo's recognition has been sidelined, not even being raised at the early February African Union meetings in Addis Ababa, despite Senegal's desire to bring it to the table as it had previously at the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

12. (C) Adepoju told Poloff that any public statements in support of Kosovo's recognition would be more likely to come from the Nigerian Mission to the United Nations, rather than the GON in Abuja for the reasons above. He volunteered to Poloff that, if the USG desired a public statement of support from the GON, the best avenue would be to approach the Nigerian U.N. Mission directly to make the case. Adepoju claimed the Nigerian Mission does not/not have any instructions to oppose Kosovo recognition at the U.N. level, but rather has taken a "wait and see" attitude. Any approach to the Nigerian Mission to the U.N., Adepoju told Poloff, should focus on the human rights aspects of Kosovo independence.

SANDERS